

THE MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG ~ COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Covering all of the Hawkesbury West of the River, from North Richmond to Bilpin, Grose Vale to Colo, including Wilberforce, Ebenezer, Glossodia, Tennyson, Freemans Reach and Bowen Mountain.

IN PLACES YET UNTROD BY MAN

By H.P. Black (YMCA Ramblers' Club)

A few week-ends ago, the ramblers "did" Buralow Creek. That six miles of mountain stream is as unspoiled as the day Cook set foot on our shores. It has remained unchanged for century upon century. There was an atmosphere of solitude about it that impinged on the sense, imparting a feeling that it was alive and we puny beings were of another world. The creek holds quite a supply of water, covering as it does a catchment extending to the Bilpin Road, its bed being completely of rock, through which it has carved strange channels in the course of its career. This rock consists mainly of sandstone, with occasional outcrops of a brittle rock similar in composition to shale. Water-scoured boulders of different sizes, ranging from tiny pebbles to the size of a house, all rounded by the elements, are strewn in its bed and along its banks. The creek is enclosed within a gorge, whose precipitous sides continually swing away slightly, then converge, so that sun is seen for a short time only. The whole time we were fighting our way- through thick brush growing to the water's edge and over soft and spongy leaf-mould, the accumulation of generations. Lawyer vines in abundance were threaded across our path, while overhead tall trees of cedar, sassafras, blue gum and many other varieties obscured the sun. Occasional glimpses were to be had of beautiful groves of ferns, ranging from the delicate maidenhair to the stately tree fern, while large, cable-thick vines suspended, python-like from moss and lichen-covered tree. ...

Rising above the sigh of the wind in the tree-tops and the soft gurgle of the creek waters in their play could be heard the music of bellbird and coach-whip, soldier-bird and magpie. Their voices were heard in song all the way, as unafraid of the presence of man as of the very canyon walls. The "noises of the night", soft, rustling grasses and scratching on tree-tops be-tokened the presence of other bush-dwellers. In profusion also were the tracks of wallaby, and on a small, sandy beach could be seen the story of a morning drink: the tracks leading down, an extra deep imprint on the edge where the marsupial had stooped, and then the track leading away – his thirst now slaked.

We pushed on still through the almost impenetrable brush, over and around huge boulders, forced at time to leave the creek and sidle on wallaby pads on a slope of sometimes sixty degrees. Contrary to expectation, the going scarcely eased as we toiled downstream and we finally reached the Grose late in the afternoon. We had been compelled to battle all way, an experience that will leave a memory not easily erased, and many scratches were evidence of the conflict.

Thus we left Buralow Creek. How long will this inaccessibility protect it and similar creeks tucked away in the mountains? As we said good-bye to the creek it seemed as though we were from an unchanged and ageless world, into the twentieth century once more, just as the waters of Buralow Creek mingled and lost their identity in the still, cold bosom of the Grose.

Sourced by Pat O'Toole from *The Bushwalker Annual 1940*

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KCHS July Dinner Flyer enclosed/attached



McMahon family in a row boat on the Grose River at Grose Wold 1920 - IMAGE 030606 KCHS Archive Collection

President's Corner

Well our busy year continues with a successful excursion to North Head and an interesting speaker at our May General Meeting. Full reports elsewhere.

Our next event is our Mid-Winter Dinner on Tuesday 24th July. Our speaker will be RFS Group Captain Ken Pullen with what promises to be a most interesting talk. The dinner is an ideal opportunity to socialise with other members and enjoy a very nice meal. We hope to see as many as possible there. If you have difficulty travelling at night, please get in touch and we will try to arrange a lift. Bookings are open online (preferred) or contact the secretary.

Name Change

In the last Millstone I raised the discussion of a name change to attempt to make the society more attractive to people in the many communities that are in our area of interest. We conducted an online survey to gauge members' feelings. There were 22 responses to the survey with the majority leaning toward changing the name, but with several responses strongly opposed. The committee has discussed the subject at our last meeting and the decision was that there was not a sufficiently compelling case that a change would provide definite benefits and members' views were also not overwhelmingly in favour of a change, so we are not going to proceed with any change.

Membership Renewals

Thank you to those who have already renewed. Membership Renewals are now due and can be done online. Even if you wish to post a cheque or use EFT, please complete the online renewal first, if you can, so we can easily reference your payment. We are also asking for your Year of Birth to satisfy our insurance requirements and so we know who qualifies for seniors' rates. We have made some small tweaks to the membership rates this year and also lowered the seniors' age to 70. We think the new rates are fairer for single members.

Bells Line of Road Corridor

The proposed BLoR Motorway Corridor has provoked a strong response in the area. The Society has made a detailed submission listing all the heritage properties that would be impacted by the proposal. Thank you to Deb Hallam for her research on this.

Committee Membership

Our AGM is still a couple of months away, but we would like to ask all members to give some thought to coming forward to join the committee. If you might be interested, approach me or any committee member (maybe at the MWD) to discuss what is involved.

David Griffiths

Update – the submission referred to above, prepared by Deborah Hallam, focusing on impacts on heritage in our area of the Transport for NSW corridor proposal, made a great impression on Council's Heritage Advisory Committee and on Council itself. So much so that it was incorporated into Council's own submission "strenuously opposing" the proposal.

KURRAJONG – COMLEROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

WELCOME to NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome new members

Carolyn Merrick

Susan Batho

The committee wish to inform members of the passing of long-time members

James Edward Israel 20/8/1925 – 19/5/2018

Philip Leslie Peck 27/7/1927 – 13/6/18

A journey to North Fort and the Quarantine Station North Head, Manly. On a splendid Autumn day 19 K-CHS members arrived at North Fort ready for a tour of this interesting Sydney Harbour Trust heritage site. After viewing a documentary from the North Fort archives on defence use of the site before being decommissioned, our informative guide lead us along the Memorial Path commemorating all campaigns Australian Defence Forces have participated in. After viewing a 9.2" rotating gun emplacement, our guide lead us underground into 200 metres of tunnels, a magazine and shell store and the engine Room. Electrical power for the Battery complex was provided by generators driven by two, six cylinder Ruston Hornby diesel engines. The original engines and generators were removed when the obsolete Battery was dismantled in 1960.



1

- 1 - Tour group on the Memorial Path
- 2 - Guide with Sydney in the background
- 3 - In the tunnels
- 4 - Panel of gauges in the engine room



2



3



4



**Quarantine Station - Cemetery 3
North Head**

Below: Quarantine Station Boiler House & Autoclave Room with rail tracks visible for the wagons, that would take luggage from the wharf to the autoclave room for disinfection. After 1914 a cable system attached to a locomotive at the top of the incline was used to take stores and luggage to accommodation and the dining rooms.



Many detainees had been exposed to diseases such as cholera, smallpox, whooping cough, scarlet fever, bubonic plague and Spanish flu. On arrival they were walked from the wharf to the shower blocks, showered with phenol or carbolic soap and dressed in clothing supplied for them. They were divided into first, second and third class clients and accommodated in different areas. The hospital was built on the hill above the wharf, where diagnosed patients were cared for, but once a person was hospitalised they were not permitted visits from family members. Doctors and nurses were on duty at the hospital for long periods and not allowed to leave the site, but were housed in adjoining buildings. The site continued to function as a Quarantine Station until 1984.



Adjacent Image: Restored first point arrival and processing buildings, now the Museum at Q Station wharf. The Quarantine hospital can be seen on the ridge above.

A Visit to the Kurrajong 1871 - Part 3
The Empire, Sydney 23 May 1871

The Northfield estate is surrounded by many beautiful walks and romantic glens, among which might be mentioned "Alsophylla Glen," and "White Cliff Glen." The former takes its name from the beautiful Alsophylla Macarthurii fern trees, which grow there abundantly, and leads to a series of magnificent cascades and water-falls, and finally ends in a great natural curiosity, "the Natural Bridge Cascade," formed by a stream which flows over a precipitous cliff, from under a natural arch of rock, and falls a depth of about 100 feet. The wall or face of the precipice is lined with ferns of the most vivid green, which, with mosses dripping with spray, when the afternoon sun begins to play among them, are lighted up with a radiance truly beautiful, causing them to gleam and glitter with all the colours of the rainbow.

The "White Cliff Glen" takes its rise from a lofty wall of light coloured rocks, at the bottom of which flows a crystal stream, which at one place leaps over some rocky boulders into a natural basin, known by the name of the "White Cliff Fall." At the top of those cliffs is another great natural curiosity, called "the Sarcophagus Rock." It was evidently formed by the action of the atmosphere; and presents the peculiar shape of an Egyptian sarcophagus resting on a small pedestal.

At the back of Northfield there is a mountain walk, constructed with great difficulty by Mr. Comrie. It skirts the brow of the loftiest part of the mountain; (300 feet above the sea). It is the resort of the wonga wonga pigeon, and lyre bird, and presents an extensive view to the north and west, embracing a prospect of many hundred square miles of country (a large portion of which has never been explored) disclosing almost countless hills and valleys, clothed with forest trees, and robed with azure hues in the distance, we described in the following lines:

*A wilderness of deep descending woods!
 A sea of trees, whose shores are untrod mountains.
 Where silence sleeps 'midst purple solitudes.
 Save the lone murmuring of falling fountains.
 Unnumbered dawns have lit these peaks with glory,
 Millions o' tempests thundered round each height,
 And lesioned lightning scathed the forests hoary,
 Since first they blushed beneath Creation's light.
 The unknown mysteries of untold ages,
 Unbroken, guard their unrevealed lore;
 We trace God's impress on earth's mighty pages.
 And seek with reverence, and with love adore.*



Tree Fern stand
Northfield Estate
Image 081444
K-CHS Collection

At the bottom of the mountain path just alluded to runs Alsophylla Glen, winding along a distance of more than five miles. In this remarkable glen a reverend gentleman from Sydney was lost for two days and nights some years ago.

Leaving the path, I proceeded to the left and shortly afterwards came upon the old cut rock road leading to Mount Tomah, Bowenfels, Bathurst, &c. It was made many years ago, and it is said that 200 convicts were employed for two years in its formation. It is now deserted, for it was found that the cost was too great to keep it in repair. A new line has since been opened, and is under the care of a road trust, of which the following gentlemen are members: Messrs. J. Town, G. Bowen, J. Lamrock, and the Hon. J. Comrie.

In returning to Benson's late that starlight night a magnificent panoramic scene was presented to the eye as I descended the Big Hill. In every direction the valley below seemed bespangled with myriads of lights, resembling the stars above, and reaching far away to the Sydney light-house at the Heads. The perfect stillness which reigned as I gazed in silent admiration of its grandeur awakened a mingled feeling of awe and pleasure which I shall never forget.

The next morning at an early hour our horses being brought round, I started with a companion on a visit to South Kurrajong, including the Vale of Avoca, about eight miles from Lamrock's hotel. The first few miles was along a lane with farms on each side, and the last three was through a forest principally of oak. On approaching the spot, we dismounted and after walking about twenty yards further there opened up a scene of beauty - but of awful grandeur - in the Vale of Avoca: not that sweet Irish valley of which Moore sang the praises, but one equalling it in every respect. Such a sight alone would well repay a journey from Sydney.

We found ourselves on the verge of a precipice fully 600ft high, almost enclosing an oval-shaped basin, and at the bottom was Buralow Creek meeting the Grose River. It was in the early morning and the sun gave a golden tint to the hills. The sound of the waters dashing and bubbling below could be distinctly heard. About fifty yards to the left, there is a natural ornamental grotto in the rock, and further to the right, going round the edge of this and descending about sixty feet we walked upon the furthest projecting rock (the roof of a cave) hanging over the terrific depths below.

Cont. page 5




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Our agents have forged strong relationships with the local community and have the knowledge and expertise to talk to buyers about a property's potential. You are welcome to contact us to have your property appraised.

A Visit to the Kurrajong cont.

About one-fourth the distance down there is an immense block of stone called the pulpit, and on the opposite side, rising alone to the height of about 4000 feet, is the Sugarloaf mountain, while far away in the distance was pointed out Mount Tomah, the residence of G. C. Bowen, Esq., and nearer to the right, Bowen Mount, the residence of his father. G. M. C. Bowen, Esq., which is reached by a costly road made by him over difficult passes.

In returning we called at the cottage and were shown over the garden of Mr. Richard Ezzy, who has an extensive variety of almost every kind of fruit and vegetable. One tree pointed out was the real kurrajong - the tree from which the district takes its name. It has a five-fingered leaf, and the inner bark is excellent for ropes. The aboriginals used it for making their cordage and fishing nets. Tradition says that when the blackfellows in Sydney first witnessed the hanging of a white man, and saw the rope placed round his neck, they exclaimed, " Him Kurrajong ! Him Kurrajong!" I may here mention that there is another kind of tree called the kurrajong, but the common name is the rattle-trap.

Mr. James Skuthorpe's cottage and pretty farm were next passed, and then we rode over to the brick residence of Mr. William Lamrock, which possesses considerable architectural beauty. It has a cast-iron moulded verandah, and choice flowers adorn the front and sides of the house. There is a young orchard and an orangery to the right a short distance off, planted with 1100 trees, seemingly thriving in a vigorous manner.

The farms of Mr. Richard Skuthorpe, Mrs. Mary Bootle, Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Stewart were also called at, and with their flower and fruit gardens, and their golden maize fields they looked as prosperous and comfortable as could reasonably be wished.

The Church of England was next passed. It is a neat brick structure erected on the top of a hill, just behind a high mount appropriately called Look-out-hill, for on every side a good view of the surrounding country may be obtained. But a consideration for the claims of other writers in your columns warns me to bring the first part of my description of Kurrajong to a close.



An interesting view looking towards South Kurrajong 1921, later known as Grose Vale. Image 053316

Below: St Stephen's Grose Vale Road, Kurrajong Image 150644 KCHS collection, curtesy Paul Hulbert 2016



Lemon Forest Grose Vale, the home of Mr William Lamrock, showing the "cast-iron moulded verandah. The property later owned by the Clewett family. Image 060302



NOTE: Parts 1 & 2 of A Visit to the Kurrajong appeared in the March/April and May/June Millstone Newsletters



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Memories of Bilpin Public School Days 1949- 1955 - Part 2

by Lesley Abrahams (nee Hungerford)

The new classrooms had new desks with two students to a desk, and two inkwells. We mixed up the ink ourselves from large jugs. Our pens were ones with nibs, a progression from the slates in the old School of Arts building. Only, the boys thought it a good trick to dip the plaits of the girls sitting in front into the ink. You then had blue or green hair, a wet ribbon, and ink marks on the back of your dress.

We didn't have school uniform, just the clothes our mothers' had sewn for us. The girls wore large bloomers, with elastic in the legs under their dresses. I made my own dress when I was in fifth class. I would have been 10 years old. Mother supervised the cutting out from a paper pattern, and sewing on a Singer treadle sewing machine. By this time I was also knitting, and making heaps of dolls clothes.

We did have sewing lessons at school run by Mrs. Kennedy, the teacher's wife. We made needle books, and book marks, and learned some embroidery. Occasionally, we did a Natural History lesson, and the teacher Mr. Ken White, would take us for a walk across into what is now Bilpin Reserve, collecting leaves and flowers.

I remember doing regular "projects" which kept us busy while the teacher was with another class. We could take them home to work on them. I was very upset when I filled a whole exercise book with the story of The Queen's Coronation in 1953. The other students had help from their parents, and cut pictures out of magazines. There was little writing or other input in those projects, which I could observe, but they looked very fancy. My exercise book was not highly marked.

The teacher explained to me that the other students needed encouragement.

Once we had finished Year 6, my group was still too young for secondary school, so we repeated 6th class. Our teacher for the first half of 1954 was Mr. Kerin. He tried to introduce a more difficult curriculum to help us. I had extended maths work and was entered for a Scholarship exam. This was very challenging, as my grandfather had to drive me into Richmond, 34 km away, and I did the exam in a large classroom at Richmond Public School. It was all a bit of a blur and I didn't do very well, despite having good results at school. We had a new teacher (Mr. Henderson) the next year, and he managed to find a different curriculum for us, so that we didn't think we were doing the same study over again.

At the end of every year there was concert on the stage. Tap dancing was very popular. We painted some old school shoes or sandshoes with silver paint and had the taps fitted. I don't think that anyone was very good, but we had some fun doing it.

In 1954, everyone at the school made their way to Lithgow for the Queen's visit. My grandfather took us in the back of his ute. Mother and Granny sat in the front, while we were on sugar bags in the back tray. Empire Day meant a big bonfire night, races and a lot of running about letting off the fireworks.

A totally different life to 21st century primary school, but we could read, write, and meet the challenges of secondary school.

Ivy Lodge (Lochiel House) and The Foundation of Kurrajong Heights, NSW.

A recent publication by Chris and Deborah Hallam on the history of Kurrajong Heights is available through the Society \$35.00

Contact: secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

Ph: Marguerite 4576 1371

QUESTION: Origins of the name BILPIN

- 'Belpin' after Archibald Bell Jr, who found a route to the Cox's River and Hartley in 1823 ?
- Pulpin an Aboriginal name for mountain. Also Pulpin an Aboriginal guide in 1816, his name also thought to be a source of the naming of Bilpin ?

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From
THE ARCHIVES

**Snowman at Kurrajong Heights
15th June 1958**

Mr Len Brocks, of "Northfield" stands with his daughter Jennifer and his nephew Greg Bucket next to a snowman in a wheelbarrow. In 1958, four inches of snow fell at Kurrajong Heights.

**Image 040102 KCHS Archive Collection
www.kurrajonghistory.org.au**



**"Henry Kable & Susannah Holmes -
Why the First Fleet and the Rule of Law"**

At the Society's May General Meeting Sharon Lamb took us on an engaging journey of two of her First Fleet ancestors.

Henry Kable and Susannah Holmes both committed crimes near Norwich in England, in the 1780's. Henry and Susannah first met in Norwich Castle Gaol and it was here that they took comfort in each other and their baby Henry was born.

Their story and Sharon's presentation was interwoven with the reasoning for the First Fleet and how the Kable trio survived in the Colony.

Henry and Susannah were encouraged by the Reverend Richard Johnson to claim the goods that had been donated to them for transport to Australia, by Mrs Jackson, a well known high society identity, who had befriended them. Henry and Susannah subsequently took the Captain of the 'Alexander' to court because the items were stolen during the First Fleet journey. It was a remarkable result with Henry and Susannah winning and receiving fifteen pounds in compensation. This was the first civil law case in Australia, creating 'The Rule of Law'. Henry and Susannah moved to the Hawkesbury in the early

1800s and lived in what we now call George Street, opposite Thompson's Square. Henry had a bakery in Kable Street and owned all the land surrounded by Bridge, George, Baker and Macquarie Streets.

Henry was also in the shipping business and he soon had schooners sailing between Windsor and Sydney Cove. He also tried farming with no success.

Henry was recently awarded a posthumous citizen award in 1996 by Hawkesbury City Council. Susannah and Henry are both buried in the grounds of St Matthews Anglican Church, which they attended regularly.

Sharon Lamb was the Inaugural President of the *First Fleet Fellowship Hawkesbury Nepean Chapter*, formed on 9th May 2015. Sharon is currently the Chapters School Project Officer. Visit: www.fffhnc.com Sharon is a member of K-CHS, Hawkesbury History Society, CSFHG and is a volunteer at the Hawkesbury Museum.

Damned Rascals is a well researched account of the couple's history available for \$37.00 at the Hawkesbury Museum

Dispatched Downunder by Ron Whittaker for the Fellowship of First Fleeters \$38.00 also available at Hawkesbury Museum

Pansy Hospitality

It was at the Kurrajong station that another servant allowed us the privilege of boiling our billies on his kerosene stove in the office. It was at this station, too, that our railway host escorted us to a guard's van on the siding wherein a cheery fuel stove blazed, and wherein we boiled our billies and prepared delicious toast in celestial comfort and out of the icy blasts which surrounded the van.

From *The Bushwalker Annual*, 1942



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Dates for Your DIARY

K-CHS ANNUAL MID-WINTER DINNER

The Village Kitchen Kurrajong

Tuesday 24th July 2018

6pm for 6.30pm

Guest Speaker: RFS Group Captain Ken Pullen

*"The Rural Fire Service Kurrajong -
Dispelling some Myths"*

Members & Friends Welcome

Bookings essential: K-CHS Website

www.kurrajonghistory.org.au - July Dinner

Cost: \$42.50 Members \$46.00 Visitors

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Please see flyer notice enclosed/attached

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2018-2019

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cheque to Treasurer PO Box 174

KURMOND NSW 2757

For your Diary

K-CHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 24th September 2018

St John of God EVENT

**Tour the majestic 1892 mansion
Belmont House at North Richmond**

Date: Sunday 8 July 2018

Time: 1:30pm for 2-4pm tour

Place: St John of God Richmond Hospital
177 Grose Vale Rd, Nth Richmond

Cost: \$20.00 pp

Note: Tickets must be pre-purchased on **Eventbrite**.

Tickets: www.eventbrite.com/e/belmont-house-history-tour-tickets-46392555382

No tickets available at the venue **or** on the day.

Funds raised help with maintenance of the building
and in the continuing story of Belmont House. **(Please
meet at main hospital reception)**

Gibson's Café on-site will be open for lunch, pre-tour.

Dharug and Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society

Invites KCHS members to a luncheon & afternoon with their
Special Guest Speaker Dr Jonathan King

*"The Planning & Re-enactment of the
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at The Chapel 6445 Wisemans Ferry Road, Gunderman

Lunch 12.00 midday - Saturday 28th July 2018

Cost \$20.00 Bookings Essential

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www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

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Society publications available including the
latest photographic collection in book form

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